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ABSTRACT

A discussion of the use of dialogues in second language instruction focuses on uses of the techniques that are more appropriate than those used in the era of audio-lingual methodology. It is argued that during this period, dialogues were overused. Techniques are offered for use of dialogues to develop learners' listening and speaking skills. Teachers are alerted to possible sources of interference from learners' native languages and are offered a number of specific exercise types that exploit the characteristics of dialogue. These include vocabulary and completion exercises and follow-up conversations. Exercise variations are also proposed, including use of picture dictionaries for prompting and role playing. (MSE)

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Abstract

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Creative Interaction with Dialogues

Improving students' speaking/listening skills is a major objective of ESOL programs.In the days of ALM, it was assumed that repetition of dialogues and pattern practice would automatically benefit the listening skill. Unfortunately, dialogues were over-used. Dialogues can be an aid to language acquisition if used correctly.This article shows the ESL instructor how to use dialogues to teach speaking and listening skills. In addition, the author shows how a teacher can adapt and create spoken interchanges from a variety of sources including radio, commercial publications, picture dictionaries.

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Creative Interaction with Dialogues

Improving students' speaking/listening skills is a major objective of ESOL programs.In the days of ALM, it was assumed that repetition of dialogues and pattern practice would automatically benefit the listening skill (Herron and Seay,487) Unfortunately, dialogues were over-used , and very little time was spend on just developing listening and communicative skills.

Dialogues to teach listening/speaking

The components of listening are recognition, selection,anticipation and memory.The levels of listening include sound discrimination,auditory memory and comprehension level.Participation must be cognitive, not merely vocal, and there is a need for challenge and problem solving. Listening also draws on background knowledge and experience about the topic, familiarity with the sound of the terms and ability to follow common spoken rhetorical formats. Listening was once considered a passive skill; however, it is definitely a creative activity as the learners process the linguistic input and apply it to their preexistent "schema" (Herron and Seay,392-393).

Possible interference:Teachers should be alert to problems that face learners such as cross-association of similar items (is and has for example-In some languages, the idiom is ' I have hunger" rather than I am hungry." Or "it has a book on the table" rather than "There is a book on the table."Another problem is the recalling of information. Like the other language skills, speaking/listening needs to be taught in order to acquaint the students with chunks of discourse in the English language and teach them the skills necessary to process the information without having them

translate back into their own language.

The following suggested exercises capitalize on student interest and provide an opportunity for some self expression after the learners have gone over the dialogues. The instructor composes original conversational exchanges based on the vocabulary and objectives of the course. These dialogues are for a course,ESOL 1 Speaking/Listening that is part of a four level adult education ESL program that prepares students for employment,GED and college prep.

Sample Dialogues

Level 1:

(Start with some vocabulary)

Vocabulary

1. hi	hi	6. classes	_____
2. tired	_____	7. easy	_____
3. exams	_____	8. hard	_____
4. take	_____	9. study	_____
5. biology	_____	10.interesting	_____

(Now have students listen, listen and repeat. Students take turns.Keep the exchange short and relevant to <u>your</u> class.)

CONVERSATION 1:"THE CAMPUS

Fred:	"Hi Kim. How are you?"
Kim:	"I'm OK. How are you?"
Fred:	"I'm tired. Exams are next week"
Kim:	"I know.Are your classes hard?"
Fred:	"Sometimes, but they are interesting."
Kim:	"Are you studying English ?"
Fred:	"No. I am taking biology."

Dialogue Completion:

1. Fred:	"Hi Kim. _____ are you?"
2. Kim:	"_____ OK. How are you?"

3. Fred: "I'm tired. Exams _____next week"

4. Kim: "I know.Are your _____ hard?"

5. Fred: "Sometimes, but _____ are interesting."

6. Kim: "Are you _____ English ?"

7. Fred: "No. I _____ taking biology."

(Now redo this somewhat with a change of players and scene. Students take parts and speak about what **they** are doing. They use their own names and talk about classes or other activities,)

Follow up conversation: "The Doctor"(Here the dialogue composer tries to inject a little humor into the class. Again start with the vocabulary)

1. pain	pain	6. left	_____
2. foot	_____	7. right	_____
3. feel	_____	8. find/found	_____
4. hurt	_____	9. nail	_____
5. during	_____	10. problem	_____

Conversation "The Doctor"

Doctor: "How do you feel today ?

Jose: "I'm fine, but I have a bad pain in my foot"

Doctor: "Is it in your left foot or your right foot ?"

Jose: "It is in my right foot . "

Doctor: "Does it hurt all the time ?

Jose: "No. Only during the day."

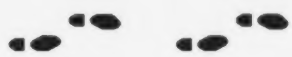
Doctor: "I found it."

Jose: "Found what?"

Doctor: "I found your problem. You need new shoes."

Jose: "New shoes? Is this a shoe store ?"

Doctor: "You have a nail in your shoe;that's all.



Exercise: Write the missing words:

1. Doctor: "How do you _____ today ?
2. Jose: "I'm fine, but I _____ a bad pain in my foot"
3. Doctor: "Is it in your left foot or your _____ foot ?"
4. Jose: "It _____ in my right foot . "
5. Doctor: " _____ it hurt all the time ?
6. Jose: "No. _____only hurts at night. "
7. Doctor: " I think you need a new bed!"

Exercise: Mark the word your teacher reads:
(This is a basic contrastive pronunciation drill. You can come up with similar "spinoffs from the various dialogues.)

1. Please get the (mail)(nail).
2. Does he (think) (sink) ?
3. We need a (doctor) (proctor).
4. Do you have (two) (new) shoes ?
5. It is a (bad) (sad) day.
6. I (found) (wound) it.
7. Give me the (dime) (time).
8. I (have) (had) a bad pain.

New Conversation(This dialogue introduces Be +V-ing and the future with *will* :

George: "Where are you going for your vacation ?"

Nancy: "I am going to the beach."

George: "Will you drive there?"

Nancy: "Yes. It is close."

George: "Where will you stay ?"

Nancy: " I will stay at the Ritz Beach Resort."

Fill in the blanks:(This new dialogue has the students rewrite the preceding one but the destination has been changed.)

1. Ed: Where are you going on vacation this year ?"

2. Fred: I am **going** to California."

3. Ed: _____ you drive there?'

4. Fred: "No.It's too far . We will go by _____ .

5. Ed: "Where ____ you stay ?"

6. Fred: " At the Los Angeles Hilton."

(A good follow up would be for the students to practice conversational exchanges following the pattern of the dialogues while putting in their own information.)

Variations on Dialogues

Students can use a picture dictionary as a prompt for dialogue production. Picture dictionaries are a good aid to vocabulary building since learners can make a direct association between the word and its referent without translating to L1. As the students, create, read and write conversational interchanges, they are using and assimilating necessary words. Current acquisition theory supports increased emphasis on vocabulary learning because "we acquire morphology and syntax because we understand the meaning of utterances".(Krashen

and Terrell, 155) Students focus on the meaning of the material and begin to develop a feel for the word building process and the overall grammar.

Exercise (oral practice) : Look at the food items and the restaurant picture in your picture dictionary. You are in a restaurant. You find a fly in your sandwich.Finish the dialogue with the waiter.Talk to the manager if necessary.

Customer: Waiter, there is a _____

Waiter: Oh, I am sorry, I will_____

Customer: _____

Waiter:_____

Customer:_____

Waiter: _____

_____

_____

A variation could be to have the class listen to an oral interview and then role play it themselves (sources include radio and TV talk shows):

Please answer the following questions based on the interview you have heard:

1. What is the actor's name ?
2. Where was he born ?
3. How old is he ?
4. What is the name of his latest movie ?
5. Where was the film made ?
6. Who was his co-star ?

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